

- (vi) In order to ensure transparency, the elected representatives and local authorities will be given lists of Voluntary Organizations being financially assisted in their areas.
- (vii) Efforts will be made to promote the involvement of qualified and committed volunteers who are also professional in their approach.
- (viii) There shall be time bound release of fund and the processing of cases will be streamlined in a manner that will reduce unnecessary delay in disposal.

(c) It is the responsibility of the Ministry to reach the target group which includes the Scheduled Castes, Minorities, Backward Classes, Disabled, Aged Persons, Street children and victims of Drug Abuse. The objective is to bring them into the mainstream of development by assisting them to overcome their social, physical and educational handicaps. The guidelines promote and encourage the horizontal spread of development alongside sectoral growth in spheres that have received comparatively less attention or may need more attention. New projects shall be approved in respect of those voluntary organizations which locate these in backward and rural areas which are not benefiting from voluntary action at present. New projects will therefore be favoured in rural areas, urban areas in cases of extreme need and in States where voluntary action has so far not been significant. The areas which are prone to backwardness and natural calamities will automatically be covered as new projects in such areas will be given priority whenever a sustainable proposal is received.

Backlog in appointment of handicapped persons in Government offices

3051. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the reasons for huge backlog in appointment of Handicapped persons in the State and Central Government offices; and

(b) the steps being taken to make them socially and economically independent?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) and (b) Various steps have been initiated at the Central and State level to fill up the backlog vacancies, such as, identification of posts, launching of special recruitment drives and lifting of ban on filling up vacancies insofar as the

recruitment of the persons with disabilities is concerned. The Government have also taken other measures to promote socio-economic rehabilitation of the persons with disabilities by providing soft-loans and micro-credit through National Handicapped Finance and Development Corporation (NHFDC) for self employment and grants to NGOs for vocational training and placement. The Ministry of Labour is implementing the Scheme of Vocational Rehabilitation Centres (VRC), through which disabled persons are assessed for residual ability and provided appropriate training for economic rehabilitation. There are 17 VRCs in the country.

Hostels for SC students

3052. DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the number of hostels for scheduled caste students actually constructed during 1998-99, State-wise and U.T. wise;

(b) whether utilization certificates for the completion and proper utilization of funds previously sanctioned received from them; and

(c) if not, the action taken to ensure that scheme for hostel facilities for SC boys and girls are actually implemented by the concerned State and UT Governments?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) to (c) Information is being collected and will be laid down to the table of the House.

Inclusion of Tarkhan in SC Category in H.P.

3053. SHRI ANIL SHARMA: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the names of the Communities which have been included in the Scheduled Caste category in Punjab and Himachal Pradesh, separately;

(b) whether Government have received a communication from the Government of Himachal Pradesh for inclusion of Tarkhan in the Scheduled Caste category on the pattern of inclusion of Badhais in that category by Punjab Government; and

(c) what action has been taken by Government in this regard?